qr 177?

20

ANSWERS

TO THE

TREASURY PAPER,

ON THE

IRON TRADE OF ENGLAND AND IRELAND.

BY AN ENGLISHMAN.

K

Many of the ASSERTIONS in the TREASURY PAPER, and all the general reaſoning appearing to be founded either on Miſtake or Ignorance of the Subject, the Author of the following OBSERVATIONS, has endeavoured, as far as his Abilities enabled him, to prevent the Public from being miſled in an Affair of ſo much Importance.

BRITAIN exports no Nails, except to Ireland and America. Ireland was not allowed to export Nails to America, until the year 1778, nor then without an equalizing duty of 3l. 3s. 11d. per ton, which, by the independence of the United States, *it is ſaid ſhe is legally free of*; therefore, prior to the peace, it was no great object for Ireland to attempt to eſtabliſh the Nail trade in that kingdom: but now that ſhe is free of that equalizing duty, and has erected ſlitting-mills; has been making trials in the Nail trade to America; and the diſcuſſion of the Iriſh propoſitions has ſhewn our opulent Iron-Manufacturers the prodigious advantages they may enjoy by carrying on their buſineſs in Ireland, there can be no doubt they will ſoon avail themſelves of it.

Ireland cannot obtain a conſiderable export trade, until ſhe has manufactories. It is aſſerted, by the ſupporters of the propoſitions, that the natives of Ireland are ignorant, indolent, and poor. If they be ſo, probably the beſt method to give vigour to them is, to have recourſe to Britiſh Manufacturers of capital, induſtry, and extenſive knowledge of trade.

It is contemptible nonſenſe to argue, that, becauſe Ireland has never had Iron-Manufactories, ſhe cannot ſoon have them. Scotland had no ſilk gauze manufactures twenty or thirty years ago, when England had many. The luxury and taxes of England, and low wages in Scotland, induced ſome Manufacturers to remove to that country, others followed them, and the Scotch availed themſelves of the knowledge they acquired from theſe ſtrangers; and Scotland has now ſeven thouſand ſilk gauze looms, employing forty thouſand people; and England is ſaid to have only five hundred.---How are the mighty fallen!

BRIT. MUSEUM

One

One hundred years ago the Iriſh had no linen manufacture; they imported linen; and now they ſell to us to the amount of a million annually.---How came this about?---The civil wars under Charles I. and the tyranny of the Scotch Privy-Council under Charles II. chaſed the people out of Scotland, becauſe they were Preſbyterians. Ireland received, and protected them; they peopled the Northern Provinces; many of them were Weavers; they followed their buſineſs in Ireland, and taught others. Philip II. chaſed the inhabitants out of Flanders, on account of religion; Queen Elizabeth received, and protected them; and England learnt to manufacture woollen cloth. The politics of Lewis XIV. occaſioned the eſtabliſhment of a colony in Spitalfields. And the Parliament of Britain, under the auſpices of ------ and -------, and others, impoſed oppreſſive duties on glaſs; and -------'s act gave the Iriſh liberty to export it to our Colonies; the Glaſs-makers fled from the tyranny of the exciſe; Ireland has now nine glaſs-houſes. Britain has loſt the export trade of that article! And theſe reſolutions made law, it is believed Ireland can afford to ſupply the home-conſumption of England on better terms than her own Manufacturers. More examples of the migration of manufactures could be adduced, but it ſeems unneceſſary; for it cannot be denied, that men will fly from tyranny to liberty, whether PHILIPS's Prieſts, CHARLES's Dragoons, or OUR Exciſemen, be the inſtruments of the tyranny. And it muſt alſo be allowed, that even the inquiſition itſelf, is not more formidable than our exciſe laws (as far as property is concerned) to thoſe who unhappily are ſubjected to them.

All the arguments that have been adduced, in favour of the ſmall prejudice which the paſſing theſe reſolutions can be of to England, amount to no more than this:--- That Ireland has not been accuſtomed to manufacture ſuch goods; and, therefore, ſhe never can. How can any body be ſo weak as to hearken to ſuch reaſoning! Are not the Iriſh *Men*, as well as Britons; are not many of them ſprung from the ſame ſtock, from the ſame common anceſtors; are not their language, their manners, and municipal laws, nearly the ſame? Would to God our revenue laws reſembled theirs as much! Yes, ſay the advocates of the reſolutions, but they are ignorant, they are idle, and they are, conſequently, poor. Many Engliſh Manufacturers will, undoubtedly, ſettle among them; they will inſtruct them, their ignorance will ceaſe, examples of induſtry, and the profits attending it, will make them laborious, and riches will ſucceed to the poverty. But, it is ſaid, that the bad habits they have acquired cannot be eradicated; thoſe habituated to live in rags, at almoſt no expence, on potatoes and butter-milk, cannot be induced to work. This may be true of many of the adults; but ſurely, human nature being the ſame in almoſt all countries, at leaſt in all European countries, an Iriſh boy, or girl, is as capable of being taught as an Engliſh one; and experience proves, that thoſe who do not like to work themſelves, will hire out their children to the Engliſh, or the induſtrious Iriſh, in order that they (the parents) may be able to indulge ſtill more in idleneſs. Theſe children will then receive a good education; they will be made uſeful members of ſociety. The Britiſh Manufacturers, who ſettle there, will alſo, by their children, contribute to populate the country with induſtrious citizens; and their progeny, and the fruits of their induſtry, will be loſt for ever to Britain.

All then that can be urged with any ſhew of reaſon is, that Ireland cannot *inſtantly* have manufactories equal to the Britiſh ones, but that it muſt take time; therefore, it is ſaid, the preſent generation have little to fear from ſuch a rival. Granting the validity of this argument, are the Britiſh become ſo ſelfiſh, or ſo brutiſh, that they regard only their immediate perſonal intereſt, and the preſent moment?—Have we no regard for the future welfare of the nation?—Do we not think of the conſequences to our poſterity?—Or are the poſterity of Iriſhmen more dear to us than our own?—But even that argument of the long time which it may take for Ireland to eſtabliſh manufactures is not juſt.—Britain has tranſplanted many of the arts from foreign countries: She has invented other arts, and by time and induſtry brought them all to a great degree of perfection. By theſe reſolutions ſhe opens her trade to Ireland: She does more; for as there exiſts no law in Britain to puniſh thoſe who may ſeduce her artiſts to go to Ireland, nor to outlaw thoſe artiſts who may ſettle there, nor to prevent the exportation of tools to that country, Britain, by neglecting in this preſent treaty to make any ſuch ſtipulation, tacitly ſays to Ireland, I have laid my trade open to you, and you *(alone)* are welcome to take any of my artiſts, rich and poor, as you want.

want.—If you do not give them proper encouragement and protection, and do not puſh your trade with all the force that their property and abilities, united to your advantages, can give, the fault lies with yourſelf; Ireland will not commit any ſuch fault. Ever vigilant in what regards the increaſe of her trade, and laviſh in her public encouragements to manufactures and commerce, ſhe will procure, by thouſands, manufacturers from Britain; ready formed, they will carry with them the knowledge, induſtry, and capital ſhe wants, and ſhe will take care to ſecure them in that freedom (from oppreſſive taxes and *exciſemen*) which is ſo eſſential to trade.

What counterpoiſe or remedy is there provided againſt theſe evils?—there ſeems to be none, unleſs the Miniſter of Britain has engaged the Miniſter of Ireland to lay as many heavy taxes on manufactures there as they labour under here: but the Iriſh Miniſter appears to be too wiſe, and too great a patriot, to come into any ſuch agreement; nor would the nation ſuffer it. And were it ſo intended, would it not be more manly to propoſe at once to the Iriſh to come into a perfect union with Britain, and to pay the ſame duties and exciſes that we do. Then every diſtinction of country might with juſtice be done away, and they would have a fair claim to all the advantages which we enjoy.

It is ſaid that Ireland cannot afford to pay our taxes *becauſe ſhe has not our trade.* We are doing all we can to give her our trade, and ſhe ſhould pay *the price* or *rent* for it that we do. Ireland is in every reſpect a richer country than Scotland; the latter pays the ſame taxes that England does, except in a few articles, and has thriven under the advanced rate of taxation. One principal hinderance to Ireland's agreeing to an union is the fear that her landed Gentlemen have of a land-tax. It would be better for England than to give way to the preſent propoſals, to agree with the Iriſh Gentlemen to fix the land-tax as it now ſtands at four ſhillings in the pound, and that no tax ſhould be laid upon land in Ireland without an equal addition in Britain, provided they ſubmitted to our other taxes and duties. The richer part of the Iriſh can afford to pay our taxes, and the poorer ſort would be very little affected by them; for what tax can reach, in any material degree, thoſe who live upon butter-milk and potatoes of their own planting; if they ſhould be affected, it would not be probably more than what would oblige them to work one additional hour in the week, and, at any rate, it might be better for the nation that ſuch indolent people did not exiſt.

It ſeems by no means neceſſary that Iron ſhould be imported into Ireland, *via London*, as her trade increaſes ſhe will import more hemp and deals, and will, as the Engliſh do, fetch Iron for ballaſt, and Engliſhmen ſettled in Ireland certainly will know how to import their own Iron as well as thoſe who remain in London, and the freight and price will be on a par as ſoon as Ireland has commodities to ſell to Ruſſia in exchange for iron, hemp, and deals.

The Nails ſaid to have been exported from Ireland to America were probably not made by Britiſh workmen, or they would have been as good as thoſe ſent from England.

Iron ores cannot be ſo ſcarce in Ireland as hath been repreſented; but if they are, they can be ſupplied with Lancaſhire ore cheaper than the furnaces in South Wales can be, and yet thoſe furnaces uſe large quantities of it.

The general price of Engliſh coals along the eaſt coaſt of Ireland, is about 13s. 6d. or 14s. per ton, and theſe coals are from Whitehaven and Workington, which are at leaſt 25*l.* per cent. better for ſmith's uſe than Staffordſhire coals.

Coals are delivered at Waterford from Swanſea, in Wales, at 9s. 6d. per ton, and which are excellent for ſmithies, or for ſmelting copper.

Kilkenny coal is excellent for ſmiths and many other purpoſes, and thoſe who wanted to eſtabliſh Nail works, or other manufactories of Iron, would naturally do it at or near the coal pits, to avoid the expence of carriage—Dublin is certainly an improper ſituation for manufacturers.

In the northern parts of Ireland there are extenſive fields of coal, which are ſold at the pits very cheap, their ſhipping harbours there being ſo bad, that they cannot have a regular exportation of them.

There are, beſides, extenſive fields of coal at or about Lough Allen, in the South of Ireland, and ſome furnaces and forges are now erecting there.

[2]